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- NEWS RELEASE -

BYSIEWICZ: AS POLLS CLOSE, 2008 ELECTIONS A VICTORY FOR DEMOCRACY IN CONNECTICUT

RECORD NUMBER OF CONNECTICUT VOTERS USE NEW OPTICAL SCAN VOTING SYSTEM SUCCESSFULLY

HARTFORD: As polls closed throughout Connecticut at 8:00 p.m., Secretary of the State Susan Bysiewicz called the 2008 General Election a success where record numbers of voters turned out to cast a ballot, using a new voting system with very few and isolated glitches reported.

“The 2008 General Elections have been a resounding victory for Democracy,” said Bysiewicz. “We had more than 300,000 new voters register this year. We had more than 2,000,000 active registered voters for the first time in Connecticut history – all people clearly stepping forward to make their voices heard. On this Election Day, hundreds of thousands of Connecticut voters were using a new voting system for the first time and other than a few minor glitches, this was as smooth an Election Day as I can remember in my 10 years as Secretary of the State. This is truly historic and inspiring.”

Reports came into the Secretary of the State’s Office from urban areas such as Bridgeport and New Haven showing heavy turnout among young voters. Lines were long in some polling places, but the lines moved efficiently and crowds were handled well by poll workers and the new optical scan voting machines. Some polling places were seeing double their normal volume of voters on Election Day.

In anticipation of the higher than normal turnout and the new voting system, Secretary Bysiewicz executed an unprecedented bilingual voter education campaign. Millions of inserts were printed in Spanish and English in newspapers throughout the state; pocket guides educating the public on how to use the optical scan voting system were mailed to every registered voter in the state. In addition, Bysiewicz launched a multi-media public awareness campaign educating voters how to use the new machines in Spanish and English on radio and television statewide.

There were minor reports of optical scan machine malfunctions in communities such as West Hartford, Avon, Simsbury, New Haven, Stratford, and some others. In cases where optical scan machines malfunctioned, backup machines were activated and used instead without any serious interruptions of the voting process.

“I am very proud of our effort to recruit hundreds of new, young, enthusiastic poll workers,” said Bysiewicz. “It is my hope that there will be a whole new generation of poll workers and that some of our larger urban areas will never again have shortages of qualified, motivated poll workers. Our college poll worker recruitment program was an absolute success and our hundreds of new poll workers did an excellent job in their first election.”

As election results come in, towns will have until 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday November 5th to report the vote totals to the Secretary of the State’s Office.